

# WORLD FOOD SAFETY DAY 2024

PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED



## Key Takeaways and Call to Action on the 6<sup>TH</sup> World Food Safety Day Commemoration

### Introduction

On the occasion of the 6<sup>th</sup> World Food Safety Day of 2024 themed “Prepare for the Unexpected”, the Africa Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and the African Union Commission’s Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), in collaboration with the Food Safety for Africa (FS4Africa) and UP-RISE projects funded by the European Union, organized a webinar titled “**Bridging Gaps in the Informal Sector**”.

The webinar served as a timely platform to raise awareness, facilitate knowledge-sharing, and foster collaborations among stakeholders to enhance food safety practices with focus on the informal food markets. The webinar aligned with the objectives of the Food Safety for Africa (FS4Africa) and EU-AU Partnership for Resilient, Inclusive and Safe food systems for Everyone (UP-RISE) projects, which are working to significantly contribute to improving food safety in the informal sector through development of innovative solutions, capacity-building and policy recommendations. The Webinar pronounces the following outcome, key takeaways to be referred to “**6<sup>th</sup> World Food Safety Day - Bridging Gaps on the Informal Sector for Improved Food Safety Systems in Africa**”.

### Preamble

1. **Recognizing** that access to safe and nutritious food is a basic human right. However, every year around the world, over 420 000 people die and some 600 million people fall ill after eating contaminated food. An estimated 137 000 die annually due to food borne disease in Africa.
2. **Noting with concern** that children under 5 years of age carry 40% of the foodborne disease burden, with 125,000 deaths every year globally, posing a health burden similar to malaria, tuberculosis or HIV.
3. **Recognizing** that in Africa, the informal food market is a vital source of sustenance and livelihood for countless individuals, therefore it is important to better understand the limitations and opportunities of this sector, beyond what seems obvious, for markedly raising food safety levels in the region.
4. **Affirming** that the informal sector, as an important player in food supply of most African countries, cannot be left outside the regulatory scheme of countries in order to create level playing field for food business operators and enhance growth of agri-food business.

5. **Ensuring** food safety in the informal sector is not just a health imperative but also a critical step towards sustainable development and economic growth in Africa.
6. **Appreciating** that the UP-RISE and FS4Africa projects integrate food safety practices with focus on mycotoxin, chemical, biological contamination and food fraud into all aspects of food production, distribution, marketing and consumption. Therefore, providing tangible tools and strategies to enhance inclusive participation in the improved African Food Safety System (AFSS) at the local, national and regional levels.
7. **Noting with appreciation** that the two project activities are aligned with the current AU Food Safety Strategy for Africa, focusing on all 5 regions of the AU with field work in 8 target Member States (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa, Cameroon and Egypt).
8. **Welcoming the alignment** of the projects to AUDA NEPAD's Nutrition and Food Systems Strategic Programs and Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) elements of the agriculture component of the Development Agency has been achieved in the two project designs.
9. **Appreciating** the EU-AU partnership and the EU-funded projects — FS4Africa and UPRISE — which are pivotal in driving innovative solutions and capacity-building initiatives tailored to the informal sector.

**The 6<sup>th</sup> World Food Safety Day Commemoration call on Governments and all Stakeholders to:**

10. **Ensure collective** efforts for all agri-food systems stakeholders to ensure food safety, animal and plant health (one health), as implementation of harmonized science-based food safety standards is critical for consumer protection and confidence.
11. **Support** dialogue among key stakeholders, including informal sector representatives, regulatory authorities, and industry associations in order to foster collaborative approaches.
12. **Utilize** the FS4Africa project's knowledge platform, in order to enhance capacity-building and dissemination of information on food safety for improved information sharing.
13. **Increase** awareness of consumers on food safety in order to increase the demand for safe food which will make it imperative to embrace food safety culture by the informal and formal food business.
14. **Develop** policies or review existing ones to address food safety, and to be inclusive of the informal sector.
15. **Promote** innovative solutions in the informal sector to assess food safety risks and encourage a food safety culture.
16. **Improve** the capacity of the informal sector with simple fit-for-purpose technologies and business models that promote adoption of food safety practices
17. **Utilize** the Three-Legged Stool Approach to food safety in addressing the informal sector which creates enabling environments, training farmers, processors and vendors, and ensuring that incentives are in place for the farmers, processors and

vendors to change their food handling practices, behaviors and encourage a culture of food safety.

- 18. Ensure** that food safety in the informal sector is adequately reflected in the Post-Malabo agenda and accelerate the implementation of the Food Safety Strategy for Africa which adequately addresses the informal sector of Africa.

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